

A
S E R M O N
AGAINST
FALSE PROPHETS.

PREACHED
In St. *MARIES* CHVRCH
In OXFORD, shortly after the Sur-
render of that Garrison.

By IASPER MAINE, D.D. and one of
the Students of *Christ-Church*, OXON.

I E R. 23. 16.

*Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Hearken not unto the
words of the Prophets that prophesie unto you; They
make you vaine; they speak a vision of their owne
heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord.*



Printed in the Yeare,

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*To the
D T*

SERMON

AGAINST

THE SEPTUAGINT

THE JEWISH CHURCH

By the Rev. Mr. [illegible]

[illegible]

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Printed in the Year

1750



A
S E R M O N
AGAINST
FALSE PROPHETS.

E Z E K. 22. 28.

Her Prophets have daubed them with untempered Morter, seeing vanity, and divining lyes unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord God, when the Lord hath not spoken.

THE PREFACE.



Hat which the best Orator said of Oratorie put to the worst use, *Nihil est tam horridum, tam incultum, quod non splendescat oratione*, That there is nothing so deformed, or rude, which may not be made amiable by Speech, hath alwayes been verified of Religion too. No one thing hath, in all Ages, been more abused, to paint and disguise foule actions. It hath been made the Art to cozen people with their owne Devotions, and to make them, in the meane time, think sacredly of their

seducers. *Conspiracies*, and *Insurrections*, drest in these colours, have been called *holy Associations and Leagues*: And the *Ambitions*, to worke the more securely on the credulity of the *simple*, have not onely presented *evill* to them growing on the *Tree of Good*, but have proceeded thus much farther in the *fallacy*, that they have still made *forbidden fruits* seem *pleasant* to the eye. And the false colours under which they have seemed *pleasant*, have alwayes been taken from *Religion*. Thus in these *Heathen States*, where they first made their owne gods, and then *worshipt* them, never plot was hatcht to disturbe the *Common-wealth*, but the writings of some *Sybill*, or other, were entituled to that *plot*; And never any *designe* was laid to destroy the *Roman Empire*, but some *Augur*, or *Priest* was taken in, whose part 't was, to make the *Entrailes*, and *Liver* of his *sacrifice*, give credit to the *ambition* of the *designe*. And thus among the *Jewes*, some ambitious men, the better to gild over their proceedings, still entituled *God* to them. Who, as if he had been one of those Tutelar, changeable *Deities*, which used to be enticed, and called over from one side to another, they still entertained the people, that they who most zealously pretended to him, had him most. And that however he be the *God of Order*, and *Justice*, & *Agreement* among men, yet in favour of his owne *Cause*, he would for a while be content to change his *nature*, and become the *God of Injustice*, *Disorder*, and *Confusion* too.

The better to worke this perswasion into the minds of the *Multitude*, their first piece of policy was to draw the *Prophets* into their *Faction*. This is exprest to us in the 25. verse of this Chapter. Where 'tis said of *Jerusalem*, *There is a conspiracy of her Prophets, in the midst thereof*. And truly, 'twas a Conspiracy so unfit for *Prophets*, that the resemblance of it was never yet found in any but those Men of a much unholier stile, of whom the Historian saies, *Est aliquod etiam inter Latrones & Sicarios fœdus*, that *Theeves* and *Robbers* hold League and friendship amongst themselves. For 'tis said in the following words of that verse, that 'twas a Conspiracy like the roaring of a *Lion*, ravening the prey. A *Conspiracy*, by which they devoured *Soules*, and took to themselves the *Treasure*, and *precious things of the Land*. And becaute pillage of this publick Nature, could hardly be gained without the *Death*, and *Murther* of the *Owners*, 'tis said in the close of that verse, That they made

made her many *Widdows* in the midst thereof. To which if the *Scripture* had added these two words of pitty, the *Fatherlesse* and *Orphane* too, nothing could have beene added to the calamity of the Description.

Nor is there a much more favourable Character stuck by the *holy Ghost*, upon the *Priests* of those times. For by that which is said at the 26 verse of this Chapter, (And 'tis well worth your marking) you may perceive that the *Disorder* to which things were brought in the *State*, sprung first from the *Disorder*, to which things were brought in the *Church*. For 'tis there said, That *The Priests had violated the Law, and prophaned the holy Things ; That they did put no difference between the Holy, and Priphane, nor made any Distinction between the nuclear, and the cleane.* In briebe, the Legall, well establishd *Service*, and *Worship* of God was at a kinde of losse, and *Indifferency*. 'Twas referred to every mans *Fansie*, to make to himself his own *Religion*, *Blemishd*, and *unblemishd* *Sacrifices* began to be sacred alike. And the *Scripture* of another *Prophet*, became quite altered ; He that offered a *Swine*, was thought as religious as he that *slew an Oxe* ; And he that cut off a *Dogs neck*, was thought as liberall a *Sacrificer*, as he that brought a *Lambe* to the *Altar*.

Next, having taken the *Prophets*, and *Priests*, so far into their plot, as to mingle and confound the *Services* of the *Church*, they made it one part of their policy, more, to make them lend Reputation, to their proceedings in the *State*. This is plainly intimated to us, by that which is said at the 27. verse of this chapter, cohering with that which is said in the words of my Text. For there mention is made of certaine *Princes*, or *chiefe men*, who are there said to be like *Wolves ravening the prey* ; Yet there wanted not some *Prophets* (as you may gather from my Text) who presented these *Wolves* to the people in *Sheeps cloathing*. 'Tis said too that they had this property of *Wolves*, that they took pleasure to shed *bloud* ; yet there wanted not *Priests*, who called *Bloud* thus spelt *Sacrifice*. 'Tis said too that they did shed *Bloud* that they might get so themselves dishonest *Gain* ; yet there wanted not some, who called even that dishonest *gain*, *godlinesse*. If you will have all this humbled to you in one short *Draught* and *picture*, how cruell soever, & destructive to the common safety, the *Projects*, and proceedings of

some men powerfull in the *then State* of the *Jewes* were, there wanted not *Prophets* who *dawbed* them with *untempered Morter*; seeing *vanity*, and *drivning* *tyes* unto them, saying, thus saith the *Lord God*, when the *Lord* had not spoken.

The division.

Which words are a History of the worst *Times*, in the then worst *State*. In which we have these considerable parts. 1. An irreligious *Compliance*, or rather *Collusion*, of *Spiritual* men with *Lay*. Some there were, (as you have them described in the precedent verse) whose designe 'twas, to make their *Counrey* their *Prey*; Others there were, whose part 'twas, to make them seem *Good patriots*, and *Proseitors* of their *Counrey*. Some *destroyed Soules* in the way to their *Ambitious Ends*, Others made it their business to put *Holy colours* on their *Slaughters*. Or if you wil have me exprels my self in the Language of both Texts, some there were who did *Shed blond*, that they might get to themselves *Dishonest gaine*; And some *Prophets* there were, who to make their proceedings seem specious, did put religious *pretences* to them, and with these *pretences* did *disguise*, and *dawbe* them.

Next, we have here, the *Frailty*, and *Weakness*, and *Deceivable nature* of such *pretences*. How plausible soever they seemed to the deluded *vulgar*, and however they might a while, not onely serve to cover, and veile foule purposes, but to set them off with a *Beauty*, and *Lustre* too, yet this could not be lasting. *Dishonest projects* thus adorned were but so many *painted Ruines*. And therefore, the *Prophets*, who thus disguised them, are here said to *Dawbe* them with *untempered Morter*.

Thirdly, for the effecting of this, we have here a very strange abuse of their *Ministry* and *Function*, let down to us in three *Expressions*, having every one of them something of the *Forme*, but nothing of the *Reality* of a *Prophet* in them. First, they are here said to be *Seers*. But as for the things they saw, they were of that foolish empty nature, that the *Scripture* hath not vouchsafed to call them *Dreams*. We may call them visions, perhaps; But such as *Æneas* in *Virgil* saw among the *Shades*. So voyd of *Weight*, and *Body*, and *Substance*, so far from *Sense* and *Reason*, as well as *Revelation*, that as the fittest word which could be found for them, they are here in this place called *Vanity*. Next, they are here said to *Divine*, or *foretell*. But 'tis added withall, that they foretold not *Things*,

Things, but lies. As many untruths as Prophecies tell from] them, And their predictions had onely thus much of Divination in them, that some time was required for men to prove them false; And to perceive, that, contrary to all true predictions, they would never come to passe. Lastly, (which was the third, and great abuse of their office and function) they were not afraid to entitle God to their vanities and lies. As often as they were pleased to deceive the people, he was cited, and quoted, as the inspirer of the deceit. And this bold, insolent sin was committed against the holy Ghost, that the vaine, foolish, groundlesse conjectures of the Prophets, were called his Inspirations: who, to make their falsehoods take the stronger, still uttered them in the holy, Prophetickall stile of Truths, saying, Thus saith the Lord God, when the Lord had not spoken. All which contracted into a narrow room, the Irreligious Compliance of Spirituall men with Lay, the weaknesse of their pretences, the abuse of their Calling, by uttering their owne vanities for inspirations, and and their owne Fictions for Truths, together with the injury offered to God, by entitling Him to all this, shall be the parts on which I will build my future Discourse. In the ordering of which, I will begin with the Compliance or Combination. Some there were among the Jews (as you have them decyphered in the former verse) who did shed blood, that they might get to themselves dishonest gain; and some false Prophets there were, who, to goe (havers in that gaine, by the Holinesse of their Function, did disguise and dawbe them.

- It was well said of a vertuous man in the praise of Vertue, Si oculis cerneretur, if it could be seen, or could be put into Limbes or Colours, nothing would more inflame, or ravish the Beholders. And hee had spoken as well in the dispraise of Vice, had hee said, Si oculis cerneretur, if it could be made visible, or put into Colours, nothing would appeare more deformed, or loathsome. To speake of it, as it deserves, there is so little Beauty or Amiableness in Dishonest actions, that to be disliked, and abhorred, it hath alwayes been sufficient for them to be understood. None but the Father of mischief, ever loved mischief for it selfe: And none but the Children of such a parent, have found out a comeliness of Evil, meerely as 'tis Evil. Of all other men, who have not quite lost their Reason with their Innocence, and over whole understandings
darknesse

1:
The compli-
ance.

darknesse and Errour have not so prevailed, as to prevent *vice* and *virtue* to them, as one and the same thing, the saying of the *Poet* hath alwayes held true, *Exempla quodcumq; malo committitur ipsi displicet Authori*; Bad actions are so farre from pleasing others, that they never yet pleased themselves. Nor can I perfwade my selfe, that ever any man could so sturle his *Conscience*, or force it, (like some compelled to enter into unwilling contracts) to imbrace a *Bad Designe*, but he for that time divided himselfe between his *Designe*, and his *Hatred*. And the advantages which have accompanied the foulness of the Enterprize, have never been to great, but that the poore colened offendor, at the same time sinned, and lothed himselfe. But then, as some either borne, or grown deformed, have found out certain arts to hide their deformities; As some I say, of a withered, ill-shap'd complexion, have by the help of their pencill, turned yellow into red, and pale into white, and by the same help, have placed a *Rose* there, where there was before a *decay*; And to have bestowed, not only an *Artificiall beauty*, but an *Artificiall youth* upon themselves, and in this borrowed shape have flattered themselves, and deceived others: So few bad men have been so unpolitick, not to hide their *Deformities* by *painting* too. And this cunning use hath beene made of *virtue*, that it hath alwayes been made the colour, to adorn, and cover *vice*. A thing the more easie to be effected, because that saying of the Philosopher hath alwayes been true, *Difficile est Nonnulla vicia à virtutibus discernere, adeo prudentes nonnunquam fallunt*, some *vices* are so nearely allyed to some *vertues*, that wise men have frequently mistaken them for *Twins*. Thus *Kathnesse* with *success* hath past for *valour*, and *comarice* with discretion hath past for *Counsell*. *Covetousnesse* well order'd hath worne the shape of *Thrift*; and *Ryot* hath put on the name of *Magnificence*, and a *large mind*. But where this *Neighbourhood* between good and evill is not, other helps have been taken in; And a *virtue* of one shape hath been made to disguise the foulness of a *vice* of another. Thus among the *Jewes* in our *Saviour Christs* time, there were some who tithed *Mint*, that they might withhold *Justice*, and some paid *Cummin*, that they might keep back the weightier matters of the Law. Some made *long prayers*, that they might devour *Widowes Houses*, and some wore *broad Phylacteries* that they might swallow *Orphans goods*. And

And thus in this *Prophet Ezechiels* time, some disguised their rapine by a *Prophet*, and their slaughters by a *Priest*; their Covetousnesse by a *Seer*, and their Oppressions by a *Man of God*. Between whom the parts were so speciously carried, that, as if there had been no such things in *Nature*, as *Right or Wrong*, *Justice or Injustice*, but only as *Holy men* would please to call them, the one devoured the prey, the other gave a *Blessing* to it; The one destroyed *Soules*, the other excused the *Murder*; The one committed *Sacrilege*, the other made it plausible. Or if you will have me expresse my selfe to the true *Historicall* Importance of this Text, the one grinded the faces of the poore, and polluted themselves both with private and and publique Oppressions; the other gilded, and palliated, and veyled, and dawbed them. *Complanabant*, sayes one, *Gypsibant*, sayes another *Translation*. The *Prophets* did smooth, and sleek, and put a faire crust upon them. The words are diverse, but have all one Sense.

For first, whether we expresse their palliation of Sinnes by dawbing, (which is the word here used by our *English Translators*, and answers to Saint *Jeromes* *Obliniebant* in the *Latine*, and the *Septuagint* *Ἀλλοιῶν* in the *Greeke*) 'tis a Word (if a learned Interpreter, well skill'd in the *Originall*, have not deceived me) taken from those who deale in Oynments. And the meaning of the place is, That as some, skill'd in such Confections have at times been hired to disguise deadly Receipts in fragrant Smells, and to have conveyed poison in a perfume, and cloathed Death in the Breath and Ayre of an Odoriferous Sent; so these *Prophets* here in the Text, among the other Abuses of their Calling, changed one of *Solomons* best Proverbs into one of the worst Compliances: Which was, that by the Opinion of their Holinesse among the people, they made some mens Illnames passe, as 'tis there said of *Good*, like a pretious Oynment powred forth. Perfumes and Odours were put upon Ambition and Avarice. And Gods Lawes were a while taught to forget their stile; And those Commandements were made mozt to defend the men, who did most violate, transgresse, and break them. Or next, whether we use the word sleek, or smooth, 'tis a word taken from those who use the polishing toole, or file. And the meaning of the place will be, That, as such Artificers doe ordinarily file rude, rough, mishapen matters, into decent figures and formes, and

by the Repetition of their instrument, and application of it artificially to the same place, doe raise a *Glasse* and *Lustre* there, where there was before onely a *deformity* and *shade*; so these *Prophets* dealt with the *publick Sins* of their *times*. *Rapines*, and *Oppressions* were *filed*, and *polisht*, into the softer names of *just levyes* and *supplies*. *Murthers* also and *Bloud-sheds*, together with the *Cries* of *Widdowes*, and *Teares* of *Orphans* were *smooth'd* and *glazed* into the milder appearances, perhaps, of *publique Utility & necessity* of *State*. In briefe, these *Prophets* here in the *Text*, dealt with some *mens vices*, as the *Philosopher* would have us deale with our *Affections*, transformed and wrought them into *Ornaments*, and *vertues*. Or lastly, whether we use the word *Gypsabani*, 'tis a word taken from those who deale in playster. And the meaning of the place will be, That as such *Artificers*, by laying a new *Crust* upon old *Decayes*, doe many times make a falling *building* seem strong, and to the certaine danger of the *dweller*, doe so veile, and cover aged *Walls*, as to disguise *Rottenesse*, and make a *ruine* seem *habitable*; So these *Prophets* dealt with the *sinnes* of their *times*. They whitened *Sepulchers*, and adorned *Rottenesse*, and *putrefaction*. Wicked *designes* had a faire *crust* put upon them; And ruinous *projects* were supported with splendid, holy *Colours*. If you will have mee speak more home to the minde of the *Text*, some ambitious men built *Houses* on the *Sand*, and some flattering, servile *Prophets* dawbed them with weake, *untempered mortar*. Which discovers to us the frailty and *unsoundnesse* of all such proceedings as are not built upon *Justice*, or *Truth*, those two immoveable *Rockes* of the *Scripture*; And leads us on to the next part of the *Text*.

a:
The frailty of
bad designer.

For the clearer understanding and interpretation of which words, it will be necessary, that I once more briefly reconcile the severall Translations of them. That which we in English doe read *untempered mortar*, a very Classicall Interpreter of the *Bible* reads thus: *Propheta ejus linebani eos insulso*, *Her Prophets have dawbed them* with a thing which is *insipid*, or which hath no *salt* in it. From whence some have made this exposition of the place. That though the thing with which these *Prophets* disguised the foule *actions* of their times were *Holinesse*, and *Religion*; and though it be true, that we may say of *Religion*, as *Christ* said of the *Teachers* of it, that it is the *salt* of the *world*, yet this *salt* sprinkled upon
for-

forbidden *enterprizes*, leaves off to be *salt*, and loseth its favour. To speak yet more plainly to you; *Holinesse* it selfe applied to wicked *designes*, leaves off to be *Holinesse*. And they who put *sanctity* to that vile use, to serve onely as the *paint* to make the unlawfull *projects* of others seem faire, adde thus much guilt of their owne to the others, that they turne *Religion* it selfe into their *crime*. And I may confidently say, that they had beene much more innocent, if in such forbidden cases they had beene lesse holy.

Saint *Jerome* translates the words thus: *Propheta oblinibant eos absq; temperamento*, The Prophets dawbed them with a thing which would not piece, or unite, or make a *mixture*. From whence some have given this Interpretation of the place, That however religious *pretences* may be found out to mask irreligious *deeds*, and however *Holinesse* may be made the *varnish* to *impiety*, yet there can never such a *mixture*, or *composition* passe between them, that it shall cease to be *Impiety*, because it hath piety joyned to it. But rather as *gilt* upon false *coine* makes it so much the more counterfeit; or as *Tinne* silver'd over is so much the more *Treason*, because 'tis silver'd over; and *Copper* so much the more deserves *hanging*, because it weares the *Kings Image*, and the *Inscription* on it is written in *golden Letters*: So 'tis with *bad actions* silver'd over with *Religion*; they are so farre from becomming good, that they double their *iniquity*, and become so much the more counterfeit. And as the *spirit* of *Delusion* is so much the more the *spirit* of *Delusion*, when hee transformes himselfe into an *Angel of Light*; so foule *projects* are never fouler, then when there is a *glory* and *lustre* put upon them. In all such disproportioned *Commixtures*, where the worse is sure to vitiate, and corrupt the better, we may not onely ask the Question, *What agreement* there can be betweene *light* and *darknesse*, or what fellowship *Christ* can have with *Belial*? but we may boldly pronounce, that *light* thus joyned with *darknesse*, loseth its rayes, and becomes *darknesse*. And that *Christ* thus joyned and marcht with *Belial*, degenerates into a *Deceiver*, and becomes *Belial* too.

The third and last translation of this place, (which our English Translators have followed) is that of *Varabius*, who renders the words thus, *Propheta ejus linebant eos lino infirmo*, Her Prophets

(that is, the Prophets of Jerusalem) have *dawbed* them with infirme, *untempered mortar*: That is, as *Dionysius Carthusianus*, very fully expounds the Metaphor, *Confirmabant eos in errore persuasionibus non solidis, sed fucatis*: The Prophets confirmed them in their errors with *weake, untempered Reasons*. All which severall Interpretations doe agree in this one and the same undenyable sense; That such is the conscious, guilty, unjustifiable nature of *sinne*, so suspicious and fearefull 'tis to be seen publicquely in its owne shape, that it not onely deales with all *sinners*, as it did with the first two, upon a mutuall sight, and discovery of themselves, shewes them ashamed, and *naked to one another*; but to cover and veyle their *nakednesse* and *shame*, lends them to such poore, faine, unprofitable shelters, as *Bushes*, and *Fig-leaves*: which though they should grow in *Paradise* it selfe, or should be gathered from the same *holy ground*, in which *Innocence*, and the *Tree of Life* were planted together, yet applyed to hide an *oppression*, or pluckt to cover a *sacrilege*, they will still retaine the fading, transitory nature of *leaves*, which is to decay, and wither, between the hands of the Gatherer, and lose their colour and freshnesse in the very laying on; and to every well rectified, religiously judging eye, instead of being a *veyle* to hide, will become one of the wayes to betray a *nakednesse*.

To speake yet more plainly to you, and to lay it as home as I can to every one of your consciences, who heare me this day; If the *designe* and *project* be unlawfull, and contrary to *Gods Commandments*, let there be a *Prophet* found to pronounce it *holy*, let there be a *Statist* found to pronounce it *convenient*, let *Reason of State* be joyned to *Religion*, and *publique utility* to *quotations of Scripture*; Lastly, let it be adorned with all the *varnishes* and *paintings* taken either from *Policy* or *Christianity*, which may render it faire and amiable to the deluded *multitude*, yet such is the deceiverable nature of such *projects*, such a *worme*, such a *selfe destroyer* growes up with them, that, like *Jonas Gourd*, something cleaves to their roots, which makes their very *foundation* ruinous, and fatall to them. At best they are but painted *Tabeenacles of clay*, or *palaces* built with *untemper'd mortar*. The first discovery of their *hypocrisie* turnes them into *heaps*, and the fate of the *scarlet whore* in the *Revelation* befalls them, whole *filthinesse* and *abominations* were no sooner

ner opened and divulged, but she was dismembred, and torn in pieces by her owne *Idolaters and Lovers*.

Here then, if any expect that I should apply what hath beene said to our times, and that I should take the liberty of some of our *Moderne Prophets*, who have by their rude *Invectives* from the Pulpit made what ever *Names* are *High*, and *Great*, and *Sacred*, and *Venerable* among us, cheap, and vile, and odious in the eares of the people; If any, I say, expect that by way of parallell of one people with another, I should here audaciously undertake to show that what ever *Arts* were used to make bad projects seeme plausible, and holy in this Prophets time, have been practiced to make the like bad projects appeare plausible, and holy now; Or that in our times the like *Irreligious Compliance*, hath past between some *Spiritual men*, and *Lay*, to cast things into the present *Confusion*, I hope they will not take it ill, if I deceive their Expectation. For my owne part, as long as there is such a piece of Scripture as this, * *Dis non maledices, thou shalt not revile the Gods*, (that is, thou shalt not onely not defame them by lying, but shalt not speake all truthe of them which may turn to their Infamy, and reproach;) I shall alwayes observe it as a piece of obligatory *Keligion*, not to *speake evill*, no not of *offending dignities*. Much lesse shall I adventure to shoot from this sacred place my owne ill-built *Jealousies*, and *Suspitions*, for *Realities* and *Truths*: Which if I should doe, 'twould certainly savour too much of his Spirit of *Detraction*, who having lost his *modesty*, as well as *Religion & Obedience*, to the *Scandall* and just *offence* of all loyall *Eares* here present, was not afraid to forget the other part of that *Text*, which saies, *Nec maledices principi in populo meo*, *Thou shalt not reproach the Ruler of my people*. * Exod. 12. 28.

Yet because so many strange *Prophets*, of our wilde, licentious times, have preacht up almost five yeares *Commotion* for a *Holy war*; And because, in truth, no *warre* can be *Holy* whose *cause* is not justifiable; If I should grant them what they have proclaimed from so many *Pulpits*, that the *Cause* for which they have all this while, some of them, so zealously fought, as well as preacht, hath beene *Liberty of Conscience*; or, in other termes, for the *Reformation* of a corrupted, degenerated *Church*; Or to speake yet more like themselves, for the *Restitution* of the *Protestant Religion* growne *Popish*;

If I say, all this should be granted them, yet certainly, if *Scripture*, *Gospel Fathers*, *Schoolmen*, *Protestant Divines* of the most reverend, and sober make, and *Reason* it selfe have not deceived mee, all *Sermons* which make *Religion*, how pure soever, to be a just cause of a *Warre*, doe but dawb the undertakers with untemper'd Morter.

For however it be an *Article* in the *Turkish Creed*, that they may propagate their *Law* by their *Speare*; yet for us who are *Christians*, to be of this *Mahumetane* perswasion, were to transfer a piece of the *Alcoran* into a piece of the *Gospel*. And to make *Christ* not onely the *Author* of all those *Massacres*, which from his time to ours, have worne that *Holy Impression*, but 'twere to make him over-litterally guilty of his owne saying, that he came not to send peace, but a *Sword* into the *World*. For though it be to be granted, that nothing can more conduce to the future happinesse of men, then to be of the true *Religion*; yet I doe not finde that *Christ* hath given power to any to compell men to be happy; or commanded, that *Force* should be used for the collation of such a *Benefit*. All the wayes more proportioned for the atchieving of such an end, hee hath in his *Gospel* prescribed, namely. *preaching*, and *perswasion*, and *Holy example of life*. He bade his *Apóstles* goe, and teach all *Nations*; not stir up one *Nation* against another, or divide *Kingdomes* against themselves, if they would not receive the *Gospel*. This had been plainly to joyn the *Sword* of the *flesh*, to the *Sword* of the *Spirit*. Which to save their *Lives*, and *Fortunes*, might perhaps, have made some *Hypocrites*, and *dissemblers* without, who would neverthelesse, have remained *Pagans*, and *Insidels* within. In short, some things in the *Excellency*, and *Height* of the *Doctrines* of *Christian Religion* being no way demonstrable from *Humane principles*, but depending for the credit, and evidence of their truth upon the *Authority* of *Christ's* miracles, conveyed along in *Tradition* and *Story*, cannot in a naturall way of *Argumentation* force assent. Since, as long as there is such a thing in men, as liberty of understanding, all arguments, even in a *Preaching*, and *perswasive* way, which carry not necessity of demonstration in their *Forehead*, may reasonably be rejected. Much lesse have I met with it in all my progresse of *Divinity* or *Philosophy*, convincingly maintained, that men upon every slight disagreement, or dissent in *Religion*,

gion, are to be whipt, or beaten into a *Consent* ; or that the *plunder* of mens *Estates* is a fit *medium* to beget a *Beliefe* or *perswasion* in their *Minds*.

Here then, should I once more grant the charge of these *Prophets* to be true (a very heavy one I confesse) that the *Protestant Religion* among us, had very farre taken wing, and had almost resigned its place in this *Island* to the *Romish Superstition*. Nay, suppose (which is yet farre worle) that a great, and considerable *part* of this *Kingdome*, had through the *Corruption* of the *times*, not onely relapt from the *Protestant Religion* in particular, but from the *Christian Faith* in generall ; suppose, I say, (which is the worst that can be supposed) that they who have so frequently of late been branded for *Papists*, had out-right turned *Infidels*, however in such a case, that *Warre* which fights against the *Errours* of men thus lost, and propoleth to it selfe no other *end* but their *Repentance*, and *Conversion*, may to some perhaps, seem to weare the *Helmet* of their *Salvation*, and the *Army* which thus strives to save men by the *sword*, may to some seem an *Army* of *Apostles*, yet I doe not finde that to come into the *field* with an *armed Gospel*, is the way chosen by *Christ* to make *Proselytes*. The *Scripture* indeed, tells us of some who took the *Kingdome of Heaven* by *violence* ; But of any, who by *violence* may have it imposed upon them, tis no where recorded. But alas, my Brethren, (if I may speak freely to you in the *defense* of that defamed *Religion*, in which I was borne and to which I should account it one of the greatest blessings that God can bestow upon me, if I might, with the *Holy Fathers* of our *Reformation*, fall a *Sacrifice*) that which these men call *Idolatry*, and *Superstition*, and by names yet more odious, was so farre from having shrined it selfe in our *Church* ; So little of that *droffe*, and *Ore*, and *sinne*, which hath lately filled our best *Assemblies* with so much *noise* and *Clamour*, was to be found among us, that with the same unfainednesse that I would confesse my *sinnes* to God, and hope to obtaine pardon for them, I doe professe, that I cannot thinke the *Ann*, in all his heavenly course, for so many yeares, beheld a *Church* more blest with *purity* of *Religion* for the *Doctrines* of it, or better established for the *Government*, and *Discipline* of it, then ours was. And therefore, if I were presently to enter into *dispute* with the greatest *Patriarch* among these *Prophets*, who, even against the

Testi-

Testimony of sense it selfe, will yet perversely strive to prove that our Church stood in such need of *Reformation*, that the growing *Superstitions* of it could not possibly be *expiated* but by so much *Civil Warre*. I should not doubt with modesty enough to prove back again to him, that all such weak, irrationall *Arguments* as have onely his zeale for their *Logick*, are not onely composed of *untempered Morter*; But that in seeing those spots and blemishes in our Church, which no good Protestants else could ever see, 'twill be no unreasonable inference to conclude him in the number of those erroneous *Prophets* here in the Text. Who to the great *Scandall* and *abuse* of their *Office*, and *Function*, did not onely palliate, and gild over the publique *sins* of their *times*, but did it like *Prophets*, and *san* *Vanity* too. Which is the next part of the Text; And is next to succeed in your attentions.

3.
The first abuse
of their functi-
on.

If the *Philosophers* rule be true, that *things* admit of *definitions* according to their *essences*, and that the nearer they approach to *nothing*, the nearer they draw to no *Description*; to goe about to give you an exact *definition* of a *thing* impossible to be *defined*, or to endeavour to describe a *thing* to you, which hath been so much disputed whether it be a *thing*, were to be like those *Prophets* here in the Text; first, to see *Vanity* my selfe, and then to periwade you that there is a *Reality*, and *Substance* in it. Yet to let you see by the best *lights* I can, what is here meant by *Vanity*, I will joine an inspired to a *Heathen Philosopher*. *Solomon*, (whose whole Book of *Ecclesiastes* is but a *Traitt* of *Vanity*) as we may gather from the instances there set downe, places *vanity*, in *mutability*, and *change*. And because all things of this lower world consist in vicissitude, & change (so farre, that as *Seneca* said of *Rivers*, *Bis in idem flumen non descendimus*, we cannot step twice into the same stream; so we may say of most *Sublunarie things*, whose very *beings* do to resemble streams, ut *vix idem bis conspiciamus*, that we can scarce behold some things twice) that *wisest* among the *sonnes* of *men*, whose *Philosophy* was as *spacious* as there were *things* in *nature* to be knowne, calls all *things* under the *Sunne*, *vanity*, because all *things* under the *Sunne* are so lyable to *inconstancy* and *change*, that they fleet away, and vanish, whilst they are considered; and hasten to their decay whilst we are in the *Contemplation* of them.

Aristotle defines *vanity* to bee *ἀδύναμις εἰς τὸ μὴ εὐχόμενον μόνον*. Every thing

thing which hath not some *reasonable end* or *purpose* belonging to it. For this reason, he calls *emptinesse*, and *vacuity*, *vanity*; Because there is so little use of it in nature, that to expell it, *things* have an inclination placed in them to performe actions against their kinde. *Earth* to shut out a *vacuity*, is taught to flie up like *fire*; and *fire* to destroy *emptinesse*, is taught to fall downe like *earth*. And for this reason, another *Philosopher* hath said, that *colours*, had there not been made *eyes* to see them, and *sounds*, had there not been *ears* made to heare them, had been *vanities*, and to no purpose. And what they said of *sounds*, and *colours*, we may say of all things else; not onely all things under the *Sun*, but the *Sun* it selfe, who is the great *ὀμνυ τῷ κόσμῳ*, the eye of the world, without another eye to behold him, or to know him to be so, had been one of *Aristotles vanities*.

As then in *Nature* those things have deserved the name of *vanities*, which either have no *reasonable end*, or *purpose* belonging to them, or else are altogether subject to *Mutability*, and *change*, 'tis in *policy*, and *Religion* too. To doe things by weak, unreasonable, inconstant *principles*, *principles* altogether unable to support, and upold the *weight*, and *structure* of *publique businesse* built upon them; or to doe things, with no true substantiall, solid, usefull, but a meere imaginary good *end* belonging to them; As for example, to alter the whole *frame* and *Government* of a *State*, not that things may be mended, but that they may run in another *course* then they did before; or to change the universally received *Government* of a *Church* meereley for *change* sake, and that things may be *new*, not that they may bee *better*, is a *vanity*, of which I know not whether these *Prophets*, here in the Text, were guilty; but when I consider the unreasonable *changes* already procured, and the yet farther endlesse *changes* as unreasonably still pursued by the *Prophets* of our times, I finde so much *vacuity*, and *emptinesse* in their *desires*, so much interested *zeale*, and so little dis-interested *reason*, so much *novelty* mistaken for *reformation*, and withall so much *confusion* preferred before so much *decency*, and *order*, that I cannot but apply the *Wise mans Ingemination* to them, and call their proceedings *Vanity* of *vanities*.

For if we may call weak, groundlesse, improbable *furnisshes* and *conjectures*, *vanities*, have not these *Prophets* dealt with the mindes

of vulgar people, as *Melancholy* men use to deale with the *clouds*, raised monstrous formes and shapes to fright them, where no feare was? Have they not presented strange *visions* to them? *I dolarris* in a Church window, *Superstition* in a white *Surplice*, *Masse* in our *Comman-prayer Booke*, and *Antichrist* in our *Bishops*? Have they not also to make things seem hideous in the *State*, cast them into strange, fantastically, *Clymera figures*? And have they not, like the fabulous, walking *Spirits* wee read of, created imaginary *Apparitions* to the people from such things, slight, unsolid melting *Bodies* as *Ayre*? And for all this if you enquire upon what true stable principle, or ground, either taken from *reason* (which is now preacht to be a *secular, prophane, heathen thing*) or from *Scripture*, (which is now made to submit to the more unerring rule of *fancy*) they have proceeded; or what hath been the true *cause*, of their so vaine imaginations, you will finde, that (contrary to all the rules of right judgement, either common to *men*, or *Christians*) they have been guided meerely by that *Causa per accidens*, that fallible, erroneous, *accidentall cause*, which hath alwayes been the mother of *mistakes*. *Socrate ambulante coruscavit*; Because it lightened when *Socrates* took the *Ayre*, one in the company thought that his walking was the occasion of the flash: this certainly, was a very vaine and foolish inference; yet not more vaine and foolish then theirs, who have taught people to conclude, that all pictures in Church-windowes are *Idols*, because some out of a misguided devotion, have worshipt them; or that *Surplices*, and the like Church *Vestures* are superstitious, because some superstitious men weare them; or that our *Common-prayer booke* is *Poperie*, because part of it is to bee found in the *Rubricks* of that Church; or that the government of the Church by *Bishops* is *Antichristian*, because in their beleefe, *Antichrist* already is, or, when he comes into the world, shall be a Bishop.

For here, if I should presse them in a rational, logical way, (unlesse they will call *Argument*, and *Logick*, and *Syllogisme*, *Superstition* too, and banish *Reason* as well as *Liturgy* out of the Church) to think (as they doe) that Churches are unhallowed by reason of their ornaments, or to perswade people to refrain them, because some out of a blind zeale have paid worship to the Windows, is to me a feare as unreasonable, as theirs was, who refused to goe to Sea, because there was a *Painter* in the City, who limned *Shipwracks*. For certainly,

tainly, if that be all the reason they have to banish *Images* out of the Church, because *some* (if yet there have been any so stupid) have made them *Idols* ; by the same reason, we should not now have a *Sun*, or *Moon*, or *Stars* in the *Firmament*, but they should long since have dropt from *Heaven*, because *some* of the deluded *Heathens* worshipt them. And if that be all the reason they have to prove *Surplices*, or *white vestments* superstitious, because *Papists* wear them, (pardon the meannesse of the *subject*, I beseech you, which is scarce worthy of a confutation) why doe not they also conclude *Linnen* to be superstitious, because *Papists* shift, and so make *cleanness* to be as unla(w)full as *Surplices* or *Copes* ? Thirdly, to lay our *Common-prayer-booke* is *Popish*, because 'tis so good, that some in the Church of *Rome* have praised it, is to mee an accusation as senselesse, as *theirs*, who accused the *Generall* of their *Army* of *treason* against the *State*, because his enemies out of the admiration of his vertues, erected a *Statue* to him. Lastly, to call the government of our Church by *Bishops*, *Antichristian*, because that Church which they make to be the *seat* of *Antichrist* is so governed, is to me such a weak *Imputation*, as by the same reason makes all the *Christian Governments* of the world *pagan*. And therefore to be utterly extirpated, and banisht out of the world, because in some points of *Government* they resemble the *Common-wealths* of *Infidels*. To all which *vain*, *unlearned*, *impotent*, *shallow* objections, raised against the Church, when I have added their *vain*, *improbable conjectures*, and *objections* raised against the *State* too ; Where things possible, nay in a *civill*, *politick* way, almost *impossible*, have beene urged, and cited as things *present*, and done ; Where, because some *Princes* have been *Tyrants*, and grievous to their *Subjects*, people in *serene*, easie, halcyon *times*, have bin made beleve that an *Egyptian bondage*, and *Thraldome* was ready to fall upon them ; And where, because there was a time when a *bunch* of *Grapes* or two extraordinary was gathered for the *publicke*, people, after so many *reparations*, so many acts of *recompence*, have been entertained, that those few, irregular *Grapes* were but the *prologues*, and *fore-runners* to the intended *rap* ; which should in time have been committed upon the whole future, following *vine*, I cannot look upon the *Prophets* who have thus preacht *vanity* to them, thus amized them with false, imaginary *dangers*, but under that description which the *Prophet*

Jeremy hath made of them, in his 23. chap. at the 26. verse; where he calls them *Prophets of the deceit of their owne hearts*, *Seers who coyne their owne visions*. Men who relying wholly upon the uncertaine illumination of their own fancies, which they call the *Spirit*, and having never acquainted themselves with the true wayes, and principles either of *reason*, or *Religion*, which should cleare their *minds*, and take off the grosse filme which beclouds their understandings, make it their bulinesse and profession to deceive themselves, and others. Building false conclusions upon weak, irrational promises; and supporting improbable conjectures, by fictions, and untruths, Which suggests to me the second abuse of the Ministry, and function of these Prophets here in the Text. Which was, that they not onely saw vanity, but divined lyes too.

4.
The second abuse of their function.

The thing in nature which makes the expression hold true, that man is *ἄνθρωπος κοινωνικός*, a sociable creature, is that we are able to repay conversation with conversation; and have a privilege bestowed upon us, beyond that of beasts, that wee can unite, and joyne our selves to one another by speech. Without which, we, who now make rational assemblies, and Common-wealths, had been only a rude, discomposed multitude, and Herd of men. Nay, without Language to expresse our selves, and to associate our selves to one another in Discourse, every man had been thus like the first, that he had been alone, and solitary in the world. For where commerce and intercourse, and exchange of minds is denied, and where all that passeth between us of men is that we are *Alter alteri spectaculum*, onely a dumbe, speechlesse shew, and spectacle to one another; meetings, and numerous Assemblies are but so many unpeopled Wildernesces and desarts. And where all that we enjoy of one anothers company is onely the dull sight, and presence, every one of us may reckon himselfe single in a full theatre and crowd.

As speech, then, was at first bestowed upon us that we might hold conversation, and discourse with one another, so there was a Law imposed upon us too, that wee should not deceive one another by our speech. *Ἐστὶ μὲν τὸ ἐν τῇ γυναικὶ καὶ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ συνδιακείμενον οὐρανὸν. Tis Aristotles definition of speech, which hath a piece of commutative Justice in it. Words, sayes he, are the images of thoughts. That is, sayes the Divine, they alwayes ought, or should be so. The minde is thereby enabled to walke forth of the Body, and to make visits
to

to another separated, divided *mind*. Our *Soules*, also, assisted by *Speech*, are able to meet, and converse. and hold entercourse with other *Soules*. Nay, you must not wonder at the expression, if I say, that as *God* at first conveyed our *minds*, and *Soules* into us by *breathing* into us the *breath* of *Life*, so by *Speech* he hath enabled us, as often as we *discourse*, to breath them reciprocally back againe into each other. For never man yet spoke *Truth* to another, and heard that other speake *Truth* back againe to him, but for that time the saying of *Minutius Felix* was fulfilled, *Crederes duas esse animas in eodem corpore*, there were interchangeably two *minds* in one *Body*.

But this (as I said before) is onely when *Truth* is spoken. Otherwise, as the *Question* was askt of *fire*, *Ignis quid utilis*? What more usefull gift did *God* ever bestow upon us then *Fire*? And yet the same *Poet* tells us, that *some* have employed it to burne *Houses*. So we may say of *Words*, *Sermone quid utilis*? What more beneficiall gift of nature did *God* ever bestow upon us then *Speech*? 'Tis the thing which doth outwardly distinguish us from *Beasts*, and which renders us, like the *Angels*, (who discourse by the meere *Acts* and *Revelation* of their wills) transparent and *Chrystall* to one another. But then *Speech* mis-employed, and put to a deceitfull use, may turne *Chrystall* into *Jet*. And put into a *Lye*, may raise a *shade*, and cloud of *Discourse*, and *Obscurity* there, where there should be onely a *Translucency* and clearenesse. In short, some men, like the *Fish* which blacks the *streame* in which it swims, and casts an *Inke* from its bowels to hide it selfe from being seen, make *Words*, which were ordained to reveale their *Thoughts*, disguise them: And so like the *Father* of *lies*, deale with their hearers, as he dealt with our first *Parents*, appeare to them, not in their owne, but in a false, and borrowed *Shape*; And thereby make them imbrace an *Imposture* and *Falshood*, in the *figure*, and *Apparence* of a *Reality* and *Truth*.

An offence so fit to be banisht out of the *World*. that after I have said, that *two* thus talking, and deceitfully mingling *Speech*, are some thing more then *Absent* to one another; After I have said, that the *lyar* is injurious to *things*, as well as *persons*; Which carry the same proportion to our *minds*, as *Colours* doe to our eyes; And have a naturall aptnesse in them to bee understood as they are, but are for

that time not understood, because not rightly represented: I must say too that there is *injustice* done to *humane society*. Since in every *untruth* that is told, and *beleaved*, one mans *Lye*, becomes another mans *Error*, whereby a piece of his *naturall Right* is taken from him; which *Right* is by the *Casuits* call'd *Judicandi libertas*. Hee is disabled to make a *Right judgement* of what he heares. His *beleefe* betraies him: And the *Speaker* thus fallaciously conversing with him, is not for that time, his *companion*, but his *deceiver*.

But when *Religion* shall be joyned to a *lye*, and when a *Falsehood* shall be attir'd, and cloathed with *Holinesse*; When *they*, whole profession 'tis to convey *Embassies*, and *Messages*, and *voices* from Heaven, shall convey onely *cheats*, and *delusions*, and *impostures* from thence; though I cannot much blame the credulity of the *Simple*, who suffer themselves to be thus religiously *abused*, and like men who see *Juglers*, thinke their money best spent, where they are best *cozened*; yet, certainly, the *deceivers* themselves doe adde this over and above to the sinne of *Lying*, that whereas others hold onely the *Truth* of things, these men hold the *Truth* of *God* in *unrighteousnesse*.

And such it seems, were these *Prophets* here in the Text. Who the better to comply with the *Publique finnes* of their times, did put *untruths*, and *falsehoods* to the same holy use, that others did sacred *Inspirations*, and *Dreames*. *Fictions*, the bastard creatures of their owne corrupt fancies, were delivered as *Prophecies* infused into them from Heaven, and he who fained most, and could *lye* with the most religious *Art*, was thought to have the greatest measure of the *Spirit*. Prosperous successes were foretold to wicked undertakings, and the *Prophets* dealt with the people, as some bold *Almanack makers* deale with us; coynd foule, or faire weather as they pleased to set the times, and then referred it to *casualty*, and *chance* to come to passe.

And can I passe over this part of the Text, and not say that there have been such *Prophets* among us in our times? Unless things should come about againe, that the *devill* should the second time get a *Commission* to become a *lying Spirit* in the mouth of the *Prophets*, with a promise from the *Almighty*, that hee should *prevaille* too, were it possible that so much *cozenage* should so long passe, for so much *Truth*? Have we not seene the *Prophet Micah's* *propheticall*

icall curse fulfilled upon this *Kingdome*? 'Tis in his 2. Chap. at the 11. ver. where he sayes, that if a man walking in the Spirit, and faithfull, doe lye, he shall be the Prophet of this people. Certainly, my Brethren, when I consider how much *Romance*, how much *Gazette*, how much *Legend* hath for some yeares past for *Sermon*; When I consider (even with teares in my eyes) the many false aspersions stuck upon our defamed, wronged *Univerſity*, by some, who (even against the light of their eyes as well as *Conſciences*) have charged the *Breaſts* that gave them suck with infected pyſſon'd milke; And have belyed their spotleſſe *Mother*, as if ſhe were turned *Strumpet*; or as if 'twere grown a place from whence *pietie*, and *giſts* and true *Religion*, have long ſince taken flight; a place which needs *Conversion*, and which affords nothing but dangerous education; of which crime, I confeſſe, I know not whether ſhe be guilty, unleſſe it be for bringing forth ſuch abortive lying *Sonnets*, who thus make it part of their Religion to revile *Her*; when I farther conſider, that they have not ſpared *Majeſty* it ſelfe, though cloathed, and armed by God with all the ſacred *Guards* which ſhould protect it from the venome of ſuch diſloyall, ſlanderoſ *mouthes*; when I yet farther conſider the ſeeming ſanctity of the *perſons* that do this, with what *Holy paſſion*, what *inſpired zeale*, what *compoſure of face*, what *contention of voice*, what *earnest Rhetorick of hand*, what *Language of Saints*, they doe this; Laſtly, when I conſider how many there are, who, driving a gainfull *Trade* in *ſictions*, (*ſictions* as ſtrange as his, who wrote of *Virgins* transformed to *Bay-trees*) uſe to lye as devoutly from ſuch holy ground as this, as others uſe to pray; And when withall I doe obſerve that there is ſprung up a certaine *ſeſt* of *Hearers* among us, who as zealouſly lend attention to *lies*, as their *Preachers* utter them; I cannot but take the *Philophers* liberty to my ſelfe, and pronounce of ſuch *Congregations*, as he did of *Markets*; that they are places where people meet to deceive, and be deceived.

And as in *Shops*, and *Markets*, Religion is ſometimes put to helpe out ſancty Ware, and the name of God is cited to make up meaſure and weight, and part of the falſe light by which the *Buyer* is over-reacht, is the ſeeming ſanctity of the *Seller*: So 'tis here. A certaine religious, holy, ſacramentall cozenage paſſeth between *Preacher* and *People*. And that they may the more ſolemnly bee cozened,

cozened, these *Prophets* deale with their *Fictions*, as the *Devill* deale with his *temptations*, when hee would have perswaded our *Saviour Christ* to cast himselfe downe from a *Pinacle*, cloath them with *Scripture*, saying, *Thus it is written*, and, *thus saith the Lord God, when the Lord hath not spoken*; which brings me to the third, and last abuse of their *Profession*, and *Ministeriall Function*. Which is to entitle God to their *vanities*, and *lies*. To which I shall onely adde some brieft Application of some things in this Sermon to our selves, and so commend you to God.

5. *Lucian*, I remember in his *satyrisme*, or *false Prophet*, tells us of a certaine *Monnebank* Cheater, who the more artificially to deceive the *People*, did set up an *Oracle* of his owne Fancying, and contrivance; in which he was both the *God*, and *Priest* to the *People* who came to enquire. And, like the *Priests* of those other true *Oracles*, which we read of, where the *Sybil* never gave answers till she was first *entranced*, and felt a kinde of sacred *fury*, and *possession* within her selfe; so he, (as often as he pleased to delude the *People*) had his sacred *ragings*, and *trances* too; and appeared to those who came to consult with him, filled with a kinde of *holy fury*, and posselt with the *God* that spoke through him.

Me thinks, these *Prophets* here in this Text, were just such *Juglers*, who, in preaching their owne *Fancies* for *Gods dictates*, did not onely set up a false *Oracle*, in which they were to the *People*, both the *Deity*, and the *Priest*; but they *divined* untruths to them, in the same *holy, solempne, Propheticall* forme and way, as others did *truths*. *Lyes* had a kinde of *holy trance*, and *extasie*, and *rapture* put to them; and *Falshoods* came from them in a kinde of sacred *madnesse*, and *possession*. As often as they had a minde to deceive the *People*, they could presently raise to themselves their owne *inspirations*; and as often as a *Plot*, or *Project* was to be brought about, they could presently snatch themselves up into the *third Heaven*; and could returne from thence as full of *holy fiction*, and *imposture*, as *St. Paul* did of *astonishment*, and *wonder*. In the delivery of which *Fictions* to the *People*, there was thus much *holy cozenage* more added, that the Lips of the Reporters seemed for that time to bee touched with a *Coale*: from the *Altar*; and God by the secret influence and instinct of his *holy Spirit*, was thought to be the kindler of that *Coale*.

An injury of that (*hypocritical*, shall I say ? or rather) bold, presumptuous, impudent *nature*, that when I have spoken of it the most gently I can, I must say tis something more then the breach of the third *Commandement*. For there wee are onely bid not to *take Gods name in vaine*; that is, not to mingle him with our ordinary, rash, light, unpremeditated discourses, or not to forswear our selves by him, or cite him to be a witness to our *perjuries*. But they who speak falsely in his *name*, and vent their owne finister *Plots* for his *inspirations*; they, who, when they should bee the messengers of *truth*, and the reprovers of *sinne*, shall stand as the messengers of *of falsehood*, and encouragers of publique *wrongs*, between *him*, and the *people*; doe not onely *take his name in vaine*, and (as much as in them lyes) draw a cheapnesse, and contempt upon it; but do commit a sin worse then perjury, for that onely calls him to *testifie*, and *bear witness*, but these men make him the *Principall*, and first *Author* of a *Lye*: And so stick the reproach of a weak, impotent vice upon him, common to none, but base, servile, perfidious *natures*, and *slaves*.

You may read in the old Testament, that the *Priest* of those times, among his other *Ornaments*, wore two precious *Stones* in his *Breast-plate*, called the *Urim* and *Thummim*. Through which, according as they did at times cast a *bright*, or *dimmer lustre*, God revealed his pleasure, or displeasure to the *People*; and spoke to them by the sparkle of a *Jewell*, as he did at other times by the *mouth* of a *Prophet*. You may read too, that after the *Tabernacle* was set up, God had a *Throne*, or *Mercy-seat* placed for him, between the *Wings* of two *Cherubims*, which veiled it; from whence at certaine times he sent forth *Oracles*. Here then, let me put this case to you.

Suppose the *Priest*, who wore the *Breast-plate*, should have belyed his *Jewels*, and when the people came to enquire of him, should have interpreted a *pale*, for a *bright Ray* to the people; or suppose, he should have taken out the *true*, and have placed two *false counterfeite Jewels* in his *Breast-plate*; and should have taught them, by a kinde of secret *conspiracie*, not to sparkle by the certainty, and holinesse of their owne *impartiall Fires*, but according to the *desires*, and *Plot*, and *Stratagem* of the *Consulters*; had not this been plainly to set up an illegitimate *Anti-urim*, and *Thummim*, which

should have cast a *false*, as the other did a *true* lustre? Nay, had not this been to make God, who used to appeare, and reveale himselfe in these *Jewels*, as he did to *Moses* in the *Bush* in a flame of *Fire*, to become like one of those *erraticall, uncertain, wandering night-fires*, of which *Aristotle* speaks in his *Meteors*; *Fires*, which shine onely to lead *Travellers* out of the way?

Once more put the case, that the *Priest* should have usurped the *Throne*, and *Mercy-seat* of God, and when the people came to enquire, should have placed himselfe between the *Cherubins*, and should from thence have uttered such *false, pleasing Oracles*, as he knew would most suite, and comply with the *humour*, and *Interest* of the *Inquirers*; Had not this been most insolently, to thrust himselfe into the place of *God*, and for that time to depose him from his *Sanctuarie* or *holy Place*, and to assume his *businessse* and *peculiar Office* to himselfe? Nay, had not this been the way in time, to draw the same bad report upon him, which once passed upon the *Oracle at Delphos*, *Apud Apollinem, ut mihi videtur, mendacia enumerantur*, men paid for lyes at *Delphos*, and sacrificed to *Apollo* to be *cozened* and *deceived*?

That this was the *sinne* of these *Prophets* here in the Text is evident from the words of it, and from their coherence with the rest of the Chapter. Who, (as if they had entred into the same secret *compact* with God, as they had with their other *Complotters* of those times) made no other use of their profession, but onely to humour *great men*, and to make *Sale* and *Gain* of their *Prophecies*. *Enthusiasmes*, and *Visions*, and *Dreames*, and *Revelations*, were uttered, as some *Mechanick* men utter their *Commodities*, to him that would give most. The *Sanctuarie*, in plaine termes, was made a place of *Merchandize*; onely the *VVare* was *Spirituall*. And the difference between *Simon Magus's* bargain with the *Apostles*, and the *Bargaine* here in the Text, was onely this, that here both parties consented; The one sinisterly *bought*, the other sinisterly *sold* the *holy Ghost*.

An offence, my Brethren, to directly against the *Truth*, and *veracity*, and *Majesty* of God; to neere, (if not out-right) that never to be pardoned sin against the *holy Ghost*, that I am sorry I must say, that all the *defence* that can be made for it, is, that our *times* have brought forth *prophets* who have taken the same course.

For

For now, as if the *Scripture* were in a peiuerse, preposterous sense the second time to be fulfilled, that the *Foolish things of the world shall confound the wise*, and that *lies*, and *fictions*, and *things that are not*, shall bring to nought *Realities*, and *Truths*, and *things that are*, he is not onely thought to be the holiest man, who can lye most in a *holy Cause*, but he thrives best, and makes the best *spirituall Markets*, who most belyes *God* to his *Glorie*. To what unweighed, acry scruples, and *vanities*, is he entitled? How is his *Scripture*, for want of learning to understand it aright, abused, and made the bellowes to blow a fire, fit rather to be quencht by the repentance, and teares of the *Incendiaries*, and feeders of it? How many are there who daily urge text for *Bloud-shed*, and undertake to prove the slaughter of their *Brethren*; (I had almost said of their lawfull Prince and Sovereigne too) warrantable by the *VWord* of *God*? What bold *Libell*, or *Pamphlet* hath not for some yeares railed in a holy style? And what Sermons have not been spiced with a holy sedition? Hath it not (even to the ruine of one of the most flourishing Kingdomes of the world) beene made a piece of Religion to divide it against it self; & to divorce a *King* from his *People*, and his people from their peace? Have not men been taught that they cannot give *God* his due, if they give *Cesar* his? And that the onely way left to preserve in themselves, the grace and favour of the one, is quite to deface and blot out the image and superscription of the other? And have not the *Teachers* of these strange, *unchristian Doctrines*, delivered them to the people in the holy stile of *Prophets*? Have they not called a most unnaturall, civill *VVar*, the burden of the *Lord*? Have they not quite inverted the injunction of the *Apostle*, and turning his affirmative into their negative, have they not (directly contrary to his word) said, *Thus saith the Lord, honour not the King*?

My brethren, let me speake freely to you, as in the presence of *God*, who knowes that I hate the sinne of these *Prophets* here in the Text, too much to flatter. Or if I would be so irreligiously servile, you your selves know that the present condition of things is at too low an ebbe, for me or any man else to hope to thrive by such a false Engine. If there be such a thing as a *VVaking providence* over the actions of men, (wick, I confesse, an unresolved man in such irregular times as these might be tempted to question) or if there bee

such a thing in nature as *Truth*, with a promise annext to it by the God of *Truth*, that first or last it shall *prevail*, unless by a timely, and seasonable repentance of their *abuse* of the Name of God, and of their many bold *reproaches* throwne upon his *Annointed*, they divert their *punishment*: Something, me thinks, whispers to me, (I dare not be so confident of my owne infallible sanctity, as to call it the Spirit of God) but something whispers to me, and bids mee in the Prophet *Ezechiels* words in another place, *Prophecie* against these *Prophets*; and say, * *VVoe to the foolish Prophets who have followed their owne spirit, and have seen nothing. Because with lies they have made the heart of the Righteous sad, whom the Lord hath not made sad; and have strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not returne from his evil way.*

* Ezech. 13. 3.
22.

Or if this will not awake them, but that they will still be guilty of the *sinne* of these *Prophets* here in the Text, they must not take it ill, if, not I, but the holy Ghost (which they so much boast of, & by whom they so confidently pretend to *speake*) passe this sad sentence on them and their *complyers*, by the mouth of two other *Prophets*. 1. As for their *complyers* (if any such there have been) who have said to the * *Seers, See not, and to the Prophets, Prophecie not unto us right things, but speake to us smooth things, Prophecie deceis; let them heare with trembling what the Prophet Esay sayes in his 30. Chapter at the 12. and 13. Verses. Because (sayes he) ye despise my word, and trust in oppression, and perverseness, and stay thereon; Therefore, thus saith the holy one of Israel, This iniquity shall bee to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking commeth suddenly, at an instant.* The meaning of which propheticall judgement will be easily understood of any, who shall consideringly marke the beginning and progresse of the Chapter to the context where 'tis uttered and denounced.

* Esay 30. 10.

Next, as for the *Prophets* themselves, who for *poore, low, earthly interests*, and respects, have suffered themselves to be *mis-led*, let them with *confusion of face*, heare what the Prophet *Jeremy* sayes in the 23 Chapter, at the 32. verse. A place no lesse remarkable then the former. As for those, sayes he, who doe prophetic false dreames, and do sell them, and cause my people to erre by their eyes, and by their lightnesse, yet I sent them not, nor commanded them; behold, I am against them, saith the Lord, and they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord God.

The

The conclusion then of this Sermon, shall be this. Fathers, and brethren of this *Univerſity*: I preſume it could not but ſeem ſtrange to you, to heare your *Manners*, and *Religion*, as well as *Studies*, and *Learning* not long ſince publickly reprov'd, and preach't againſt out of this *Pulpit*, by men, who profeſſe themſelves, indeed, to be *Prophets*, but diſcovering to you ſo little, as they did of the *abilities* of *Prophets ſonnes*, could not but ſeem to you very unfit *Reformers*, or inſtructers of this place. I preſume alſo, that with a ſerious griefe of heart, you cannot but ſent, that there ſhould bee thought to be ſuch a *dearth*, and ſcarcity of able, *verſuous* men among us, that the *Great Councell* of this Kingdome, in pittie to our wants, ſhould think it needfull to ſend us men *better gifted*, to teach us how to *preach*. What the negligence, or ſloth, or want of *induftrie*, in this place hath been, which ſhould deſerve this great *exprobration* of our *Studies* from them; or how one of the moſt famous *Springs of Learning*, which of late *Europe* knew, ſhould by the miſ-representation of any falſe reporting men among us, fall to low in the eſteem of that *great Aſſembly*, as to be thought to need a *Tutor*, I know not: Nor will I here over-curiously enquire into the ungiſtedneſſe of the perſons, who have drawne this *reprooſe* upon us, or ſay that ſome of us, perhaps might have made better uſe of our time, and of the bounty of our *Founders*, then by wrapping up our *Talent* in a *Napkin*, to draw the ſame reproach upon our *Colledges*, which once paſſed upon *Monaſteries*, which grew at length to be a Proverbe of *Idleneſſe*. But that which I would ſay to you, is this: *Solomon*, in one of his Proverbs, ſends the ſluggiſh man to the *Spider*, to learne *diligence*. Take it not ill, I beſeech you, if I ſend ſome of you (for this is a piece of exhortation which doth concerne very few) who have been leſſe induſtrious to theſe *vaine*, but *active Prophets*, which I have al this while preach't againſt. Miſtake me not, I doe not ſend you to them, to learne knowledge of them. For you know 'tis a received *axiom* among moſt of them, that any *unlearned*, *unſtudied* man, aſſiſted with the *Spirit*, and his *Engliſh Bible*, is ſufficiently gift'd for a *Preacher*. Nor doe I ſend you to them to be taught their *bad Arts*, or that you ſhould learn of them to *dawbe* the publique *ſinnes* of your times; or comply with the *inſatiable*, *iſching Eares* of thoſe whom *St. Paul* deſcribes in the fourth Chapter of his ſecond *Epistle* to *Timothy*, at the third

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werse, where he sayes, that the time should come, when men should not endure sound Doctrine, but after their owne lusts, should heape to themselves teachers. A prophetic, which I wish were not too truly come to passe among us; where *Studies* and *learning*, and all those other excellent *helpes*, which tend to the right understanding of the *Scripture*, and thereby to the preaching of *sound Doctrine*, are thought so unnecessary by some *Mechanicks*, *vulgar men*, that no *Teachers* suit with their *sicks*, *queasie Palats*, who preach not that stuffe, for which all good *Schollers* detervedly count them mad: I do not, I say, send you to them for any of these reasons. But certainly, something there is which you may learne of them; which *St. Paul* himself commends to you, in the *second verse* of the fore-mentioned *Chapter*. If you desire to know what it is, 'tis an unwearied, frequent, sedulous diligence of *Preaching* the Word of God, if need be, as they doe: *In season, out of season*, with reproofe of sin, where ever you finde it, and with exhortation to goodnesse where ever you find it too; and this to be done at all times, though not in all places. For certainly, as long as there are Churches to be had, I cannot thinke the next heap of *Turfes*, or the next pile of *Stones*, to be a very decent *Pulpit*; or the next Rabble of *People*, who will finde *cares* to such a *Pulpit*, to be a very seemly *Congregation*. For let me tell you my brethren, that the power of these mens industries, never defatigated, hath been so great, that I cannot thinke the milde *Conquerour* (whole Captives we now are, and to whose praise, for his civill usage of this afflicted *University*, I as the unworthiest member of it, cannot but apply that *Epithet*) owes more to the *Sword*, and *courage* of all his other Souldiers, for the obtaining of this, or any other *Garrison*, then to the *Sweats*, and active *Tongues* of these doubly armed *Prophets*; who have never failed to hold a *Sword* in one hand, and a *Bible* in the other. There remaine then, but one way for us to take off the present *reproach*, and *imputation*: throwne upon us, Which is to confute all flie, sinister, clancular *reports*, and to out-doe these active men hereafter in their owne industrious way. To preach *Truth* and *Peace*, and *sound Doctrine* to the *People*, with the same *sedulity*, and *care*, as they preach *Discord*, *Variance* and *Strife*. If this course be taken, and be with fidelity pursued, it will not onely bee in our power to *dis-inchant* the *People*, (who of late (by what *Spell*, or *Charme* I know not) have

have unawares begun to entertaine a piece of *Popery* amongst them, and to think, *ignorance the onely Mosher of Devotion*) But it will be no hard matter for us, (towards the effecting of so charitable a worke, as the undeceiving of so many well-minded, but mis-guided Soules) to make our true *Arts* deale with their *false*, as the *Rod* of *Moses* dealt with the *Magicians Serpents*, first, shew them to be onely so much fantastickall *Forme*, and *Aire*, then consume and eat them up, in the presence of their *Believers*. To which (for a conclusion of all) I shall onely adde this, That if this course bee taken, and bee reduced to practice, assisted with those great advantages (which are to most of them unknown) of *Study, Learning, Tongues*, the use of *Libraries*, and *Books*, besides those other helps of *opportunity, time*, and *leisure*, to render our selves able, (which they too immaturely ingaged to a Family, or Fortune, cannot haue) we shall not onely comply with the ends and intentions of those *Founders*, who built us *Colledges*: (which they, certainly, intended should be *Schools of vertue*, not *Nurseries of sloth*) but our despised *Mosher, the University*, shall reap more honour by us, our *Countray* more service, and *God* more glory. To whom with his *Son*, and the *Holy Spirit of truth*, be ascribed all honour and praise.

Amen.

FINIS.
